

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS, ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS, THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE."—Isa. lii, 7.

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LECTURE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

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If it be true, as saith the celebrated *Montesquieu*, that "in proportion as a government is animated by the spirit of liberty, the more mild will be its punishments," it might reasonably be expected that the escutcheon of our fair land would not now be stained with the blood of victims to cruel enactments. We have, thank God, as much of that liberty, as any people on the face of the Globe; and we would fain believe, that though the statutes of the state are as yet opposed to the truth of the observation just quoted, there is a redeeming spirit abroad among the people—a spirit of justice, humanity and christian philanthropy, which will not be stayed in its progress until it has conformed all conflicting feelings and opinions into its own benevolent image. The increase of enlightened views in this community, on the subject of crime and punishment, would seem to require at no very distant period the abolition of all laws which are characterized as cruel or revengeful; and this result will probably be not a little hastened by that growing aversion which is felt by the public, at each successive instance of capital conviction. The public mind already revolts with loathing at the spectacle of human executions, and we trust it will soon be directed to the inquiry—how the most generous feelings of human nature may for the future be preserved from outrage, in the infliction of the law's penalty.

Believing that there are many who are honestly opposed to the abolition of sanguinary enactments—whose opinions on the subject are more the result of prejudice and false views of the authority which is supposed to sanction them, than from any desire for their continuance; it is our purpose on the present occasion to examine the subject candidly, with a view to enlist the attention and by consequence the judgment and feelings of my audience in a matter of such interesting importance to the cause of benevolence, and bearing so strongly upon the character of the age and the liberal institutions of our common country.

To give you a clear idea of our views of the matter in hand, we shall in the first place offer several objections to capital punishment, and secondly, consider the arguments generally offered in favor of the custom.

1. Capital punishment is an infringement of natural right.* The possession of life is a natural right which it is the duty of every one to protect to the utmost of his power. No individual has any right to take away his own life. Such an act would be unnatural and consequently wrong—being repugnant to a primary law of nature—the preservation of existence. Now if mankind in a state anterior to the formation of social compacts do not possess any natural right to take their own lives, it cannot be supposed that they could ever have

delegated to community any such power. And as all human laws should be founded on the broad principles of natural right, and the authority assumed by a government should originally have been yielded by the people constituting a social compact, it must be shown not only that individuals have a natural right to take life, but have also delegated that right to a tribunal of their own establishment, before it can be just to inflict capital punishment. But admitting the natural right, is there any evidence that it was given up to the constituted power? We answer no, for the very plain reason that such a delegation of power would defeat the very end sought to be gained by association, which was the better security of the primary and unalienable rights of each individual, by giving up "the smallest portion possible of the liberty of each." If the power over life was given up we cannot see how any advantage was gained by the parties from the social compact. Manifestly they would be better off in a state of nature; and as the desire of obtaining the greatest sum of happiness is the prevailing motive of action with mankind, such compacts never would have been formed without they were expected to result in private benefit; for individual interest is the moving principle of all original combinations of men.

But it will be asked, have not men in a state of nature the right to punish for crimes against the Law of nature, such as murder for instance? and if so, have they not virtually vested this right in the hand of the judicial power they have themselves set up? We reply that such a right is unquestionably vested in each individual in a state of nature for as Mr. Wm. Blackstone has remarked, "it must be vested in some body, otherwise the laws of nature would be vain and fruitless, if none were empowered to put them in execution." It will likewise be admitted that each individual on entering a social compact does not lose such a right, but is capable of delegating the same to the constituted authorities, whose power consist in the aggregate of all the individual rights in the community. But this does not affect the question at issue. It does not prove that the magistrate has any power to take life—because his authority over the members of a community can extend no further than that which each individual has naturally over himself or others. Now the taking of life, we contend, never did belong to any one in a state of nature, except perhaps in self-defence in cases of imminent danger; consequently the state has no right to assume a greater power than belonged to each member naturally. If its existence is positively threatened and the life of the assailant is absolutely necessary for its preservation, the right is granted, as it would be to an individual in the state of nature under the same circumstances. But no one has a natural right to take his own life, consequently he can never delegate that right to others, nor can it be assumed lawfully by the community of which he is a member by voluntary contract, expressed or implied.

All the question of right then in a community to inflict the punishment of death, it is clearly seen, depends upon the natural right of each individual to do the same. But this natural right does not exist except in the case of self-defence. No one has a right to commit suicide

—consequently the right of the state must correspond with that of each individual member of it. Hence the right to inflict capital punishment is limited to a solitary case when the existence of a government depends upon the death of an assailant; but even here the event is so uncommon as to form no argument in favor of such punishment. The case may have been that the very life of a whole community has been hazarded by the treason of one individual, but it is obviously an extreme case and cannot be used as proof of the right for those deliberate legal murders which have the sanction of our laws, and against which we are contending. It should be recollected moreover that the acknowledged right of a state to preserve its own existence at the expense of an assailant's, can only be exercised on the instant that existence is deeply endangered. After such danger to an individual or a state is passed, and time is afforded for other punishments and safeguards, the right to kill, which is based on the principle of self-defence, must be yielded also as untenable.

2. The infliction of the punishment of death is contrary to one of the principal objects of all punishment—viz: the emendation of the offenders. Every law has a penalty annexed thereto for its violation. But what is the object of this penalty? Is it to destroy the culprit? certainly not. It is to prevent crime, by the reformation of the criminal and the restoration of his honest services to the community, or by guarding the state from future depredation. The first object, which should never be lost sight of in the assessment of a penalty, it is plain can never be accomplished by the infliction of capital punishment. There is no opportunity given in such a case for the culprit to be reformed. He is hurried through the forms of law as speedily as possible, and as speedily hurried into eternity, as if through fear that he might escape the vengeance prepared for him, or it would lose its force and efficacy by the smallest delay. The question of reformation is never thought of in such instances, but the whole aim of the law appears to be to revenge the injury inflicted on the state by the criminal. It is in fact never inquired whether it is right to meet wrong with wrong and injury with injury, or whether two wrongs can ever make one right; but this position is taken for granted, and there is no atonement desired or accepted save that which is sealed with the blood of the victim. Hence, there is not the most distant idea concerning his restoration to usefulness in society. That is rendered impossible by the very nature of the infliction and the expedition with which it is generally carried into effect.

Nor will it be pretended with justice, that community cannot be preserved from the future depredation of a criminal without taking life. This argument might be of avail in rude states of society where there are no facilities for the confinement of convicted persons, but it cannot be urged with propriety in any civilized land where prisons abound. Our jails and Penitentiaries are found sufficient to confine the petty felon—the midnight marauder—and criminals of all sorts and degrees of guilt; and probably many are thus confined who are more deeply dived in villainy than the homicide whose fate the law makes different. Many a man

* See this point more fully illustrated in a Lecture on Capital Punishment, by Br. A. C. Thomas of Philadelphia, which was published in 1830. I acknowledge myself indebted to said Lecture for several ideas contained in this.—A.

commits murder under the influence of strong passions and is not in reality hardened in sin, yet it is thought that society is not safe by the confinement of such a person, when a *veteran* in all other sorts of iniquity is not subjected to a different punishment. If a homicide, or, rather a murderer, (for the law recognizes a difference between the two,) was always the most abandoned and desperate villain to be found, there might be more reason in making the penalty different; but still we contend that all the ends of justice, so far as society is concerned, can be accomplished by the *perpetual* withdrawal, (if you please,) of the criminal from an opportunity to trespass again upon the rights of others.—The heavy manacle and the solitary cell are altogether sufficient for this purpose without inflicting the penalty of death.

3. *Capital punishments* are objectionable because they allow of no time to correct *false verdicts* in the case of *innocent persons* who have been convicted of capital offences. Such cases are by no means rare, as any one acquainted with the annals of jurisprudence can testify. *Innocent* men, by an unfortunate train of circumstantial evidence, have sometimes been involved in all the suspicion of guilt and in all the horror of a cruel punishment, whom it was impossible to save at the time from *judicial vengeance*, yet whom subsequent events acquitted of all participation in crime. And where can a moment be made for all this *injury* towards an unfortunate citizen? Perhaps he has a wife and children and friends who have thus been wantonly deprived of their stay, support, and solace! Will the useless regrets of the administrators of the law, or their pleading of good intentions, make satisfaction for the irreparable wrong? will they bring back a *murdered* husband and *father* to the bosom of a disconsolate family who have been sacrilegiously robbed of their peace and happiness, under the pretext of justice! Say not such an event never happens. It is not only a very possible thing, but it is probable—*yea* certain. The Hon. Mr. Livingston, late secretary of state, (in his report to the senate of Louisiana,) gives an instance of a man in Vermont who was tried for murder and convicted, and was soon to be executed. A few days however before the appointed day, his innocence was clearly proved by the discovery of the real murderer! And many cases are recorded of others being actually executed for crime of which they were subsequently found to be innocent! And no wonder. Human tribunals are at best imperfect. They are liable to misconceive the testimony offered, and witnesses may testify to things which are false. Men too, may be called as jurors who may through the influence of popular excitement be biased against a prisoner charged with a horrid crime, and hence not be prepared to give an impartial verdict. Their feelings of indignation against the crime may be unjustly transferred to the person suspected of having done so foul a deed. Hence, erroneously *fatal* verdicts are doubtless often given—many of which, we fear, have never been revealed soon enough to be rectified here upon the earth, because no one chooses to inquire too closely into the concerns of one charged with a heinous offence, and the whole affair soon passes from the public mind no more to be recalled; especially when it is supposed the case has undergone the usual fair examination of a court and jury. All this evil can however be averted by substituting close imprisonment for capital punishment, and by making the former subject to remission in case a false judgment could subsequently be proven.

In answer to this it may be urged that the Executive of government has now a *pardon*ing power in his hands which may be used

to rectify mistaken verdicts. This does not however remedy the evil, inasmuch as this *pardon*ing power must be exercised instantaneously if at all, or at least before there is any reasonable time allowed for the condemned to prove his innocence, or before there is any opportunity afforded the Chief Magistrate to obtain an insight into the character of the accused, with a view to a judicious exercise of his pardoning prerogative. This is an advantage too which humanity would plead might be extended to a murderer even, for surely all such are not necessarily incapable of being made good citizens by a reforming punishment. In case then of the substitution of imprisonment, for death, there would be a possibility of restoring such to society and usefulness, which of course could not be done under the present system.

4. The ends of justice are frustrated or impeded by the existence of cruel or sanguinary laws. This is particularly the case in our own country. Public opinion revolts so much at capital executions, that where death is the penalty of the law, it is extremely difficult often, to get a jury who are willing to render a verdict which they know will result fatally to the accused. Whereas, if a just and reforming penalty were to be inflicted, there would be no obstruction to a calm investigation of the matter and rendering a corresponding judgment. If the punishment is known to be mild, justice will be allowed to take its course unimpeded by the sympathy or the aversion of the public. Here then is an important consideration. Such is the prevailing feeling in the community, that the guilty are apt to escape all punishment rather than be made the subjects of a penalty of revolting severity. And this feeling is one which does honor to human nature, as it arises from the benevolent dictates of the heart. There is danger however from its exercise for the reason just stated. The ends of justice are apt to be frustrated, particularly in cases where a criminal is protected by his youth, previous standing and character in society, connexions, &c. These things have an important bearing upon the verdict—perhaps some in all cases—but more especially in trials where death is the penalty; an instance of which might be named, as of recent occurrence in a neighboring state, where an *acquittal* of a prisoner may be traced to a repugnance to *capital* punishment. We have no manner of doubt, that in the case to which allusion is made, a different verdict would have been rendered, if the punishment for the crime charged had been other than the infliction of death, for the jury it seems were (to a good degree) satisfied of the prisoner's guilt, leaving it barely *possible* they might be mistaken and he be innocent! The offender was accordingly released from all punishment from human laws, although in the eye of the world he is looked upon as an *acquitted* felon.

As an evidence of the feeling now existing on the subject of penal enactments of a vindictive character, even in England, an account is given in the public prints of the result of capital convictions in that country, for one year, which is truly extraordinary. It is stated that out of 583 cases of this sort, only four individuals suffered the full rigor of the penalty annexed to their crimes, the rest being *transported*, *pardoned* or otherwise punished. Now this is an evasion of the severity of the penal code which we like better than the entire acquittal of a guilty person, but our laws will not admit of such commutation in general, or if they do, our magistrates do not wish to take upon themselves the responsibility for so doing. The fact which we have stated is however a strong argument in favor of the abolition of all penal-

ties which have not the sanction of the age, and we give it with pleasure, as affording grounds to hope for a speedy change of all criminal codes so as to correspond with the refinement and enlightened benevolence of the times.

5. Capital punishments are *insufficient* to deter men from the *commission of crime*. It is indeed a question whether the infliction of the penalty of death for other crimes than murder, as is the custom in some countries, and even in this does not directly increase the number of capital crimes instead of the contrary. A man who has been led to commit the lesser iniquity is perhaps often induced to act on the principle that "*dead men tell no tales*" and add murder to robbery, simply because if detected, death is their doom for either offence and nothing more nor less. This is the very reason why *piracy on the high seas* is so generally marked with the spirit of extermination. The wretches who are thus engaged know that death is the penalty of piracy and that it cannot be worse for them, (but better, as there is greater chance of escape,) if they remove all witnesses against them by means of the pistol or stiletto. Such at least has been the confession of a pirate.

But the infliction of death is insufficient to prevent crime even when wilful murder is the only one thus punished. The reason why we think so is this: The man who is wrought upon to commit such a deed makes no calculation concerning the consequences. The crime is mostly the effect of the strongest passions of our nature, such as ambition, revenge, and avarice, and when under their influence, no probable consequence of death to himself will stay the murderer's arm. Besides, there is a chance of escape, through want of sufficient proof or other cause; or if it comes to the worst it is but a momentary struggle and all is over. To show that the fear of death operates but partially on mankind look at the heroism of many in braving all kinds of danger—facing the cannon's mouth for instance. The minds of such men are *nerved* to deeds of daring and bold achievement, and look upon the fear of death with sovereign contempt—as the offspring of cowardly and pusillanimous souls. How much suppose ye, did the mighty Napoleon fear the universal conqueror, when he was engaged in prosecuting his schemes of mad ambition. We presume but little. And so probably with others of like strong but more ignoble passions, the desperate highwayman or midnight assassin. However much they may dread the gallows after the commission of crime, they care but little and think less about it before. So that it is insufficient to accomplish the end proposed.

The indifference of criminals as to the fate of themselves and companions under sentence of death may be noticed here, as further proof of the ineffacy of the punishment to restrain crime. The keeper of the New Gate Prison, London, testifies that they generally make sport of the event as one that was expected, and that they will laugh and joke when mounting the cart which conveys them to the fatal tree. Instances have been recorded too where a gang of counterfeiters have prosecuted their unlawful business in the very room where lay the corpse of one of their number who was executed for the offence, which they were preparing to commit. Look also at the result of public executions in our own land. Do they deter men from the commission of crime? Are murders any the less frequent now it has become common to hang up a fellow-being midway between heaven and earth? Surely not. There never was a time perhaps when there were so many appalling accounts of this description to be found in the public prints, which is certainly some evidence that capital punishments have

failed of their boasted effect. Thousands will collect to see a public example of the law's severe penalty and, as if to prove that they cared nothing about it, many will launch forth into every species of excess, within sight of the suspended victim. The case of *Lechler* who was executed in Lancaster Co. in this state (Pennsylvania) some few years since, affords proof of the truth of this statement. It is alledged on good authority that on the evening of that day, no less than 25 persons were imprisoned in the Lancaster Jail, "for murder, larceny, assault and battery," &c. A man of the name of *Wilson* killed another of the name of *Burns*, and was ironed with the same manacles which *Lechler* had just thrown off! So much for the benefit of the example of capital punishment.

There are other evils connected with this system of legal killing which may be noticed under this head. We mean the morbid feeling which is nourished in a community where bloody spectacles are common, on the one hand, and the indifference which is apt to arise by a familiarity with such scenes on the other.—Both these effects, though opposite in their character, are the consequence of public exhibitions of this kind, operating upon people of different feelings and temperaments. I might refer you for illustration of the first named to the public feeling at the time of the Bartholomew massacre in France and at the period when old women were hung for witches in the eastern section of our own country! These cases will prove that it is possible so to excite the turbulent passions of men that *reason, humanity, and justice* are all sacrificed to a savage spirit for blood and carnage, and all this too under cover of law!

As an instance of the other kind, see what indifference, so far as the terror of the example is concerned, was manifested at the recent execution in New-Jersey. Many saw no example in the whole affair. They looked upon the victim rather as a martyr than as a guilty man. They saw him surrounded by the pomp of law and the sacred ceremonies of religion; and their indignation at the crime was changed into sympathy for the sufferer—consequently such were not benefited by the admonition purposed to be held out as a warning to others, in the execution of the law's penalty.

It may here be objected that were capital punishments to be abolished, there might be a door opened to the commission of crime which no man could shut. To this we reply, that although the evidence necessary to prove the reverse is limited, from the fact that nearly all nations have had sanguinary laws, yet we are not altogether without valuable testimony in disproof of the objection. There are two cases in point in Ancient and two in Modern History, which deserve our special notice. For 250 years from the date of the Valerian law among the ancient Romans until the overthrow of the institutions of the republic, it was not lawful to put a Roman citizen to death; and history informs us that offences were not then very prevalent, but afterwards, when executions became frequent, Rome became notorious for every degree and species of crime. Egypt too, under the government of Sabaco was for 20 years ruled under that same mild system, with no increase whatever of crime.

In modern times we have the examples of Elizabeth and Catharine 2d of Russia and that of Leopold of Tuscany—all in favor of the abolition of the punishment of death. For 20 years under Elizabeth, there was not one case of capital conviction—yet crime did not increase; and for 25 years, under the system of graduated punishments adopted by Leopold, there was a decrease of the number of offences, particularly those of an atrocious character, and the prisons also were empty or a considerable

period. These facts, (for which and other important ideas I acknowledge myself indebted to Mr. Livingston's Report on this subject to the senate of Louisiana, and to a valuable work on crime and punishment by Beccaria,) will seem to show that there is no danger to be apprehended from the abolition of all severe enactments, but on the contrary much good is to be anticipated, for, as has been judiciously observed, "crime is more effectually prevented by the certainty than by the severity of punishment."

There is another fact which goes far to prove the inefficacy of the punishment of death. It is that a comparison between the prevalence of crime in this country and Great Britain in cases which are punishable with death there and otherwise here, results to the advantage of the mild system, in the proportion, if we mistake not, of 27 to one, while in cases which are punishable with death in both countries the proportion of crime is vastly against us; thus showing that we in the United States at least are not the gainers by the capital system.

Having now given our objections briefly to the custom in question, we proceed to notice a few of the arguments offered in favor of the same which have not yet been touched upon, in the present Lecture.

The most common argument which is advanced, is the supposed authority of Jehovah, as found in his instructions to Noah (Genesis ix chapter) after the latter had come out of the ark. The text relied on is as follows, "*whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.*" The connexion however of this passage will show that the common understanding of it is by no means satisfactory. God had just blessed Noah and commanded him to go forth and replenish the earth, having delivered into his hand dominion over all things therein, saying: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I given you all things: But flesh with the life thereof which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man, whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Here then we have the declaration that the blood of their lives was required at the hand of every beast and at the hand of every man's brother! Will it therefore be argued that because a brother of mine should be murdered by another individual, that his blood was to be required of me, or that satisfaction should be taken of the beast who should happen to devour him? No one will pretend this, yet they may with the same propriety, as to convert a part of the connexion into a divine Precept for our observance at the present day. The truth is, the phrase thus changed is not necessarily to be considered a precept at all, but a prediction. Such is the opinion of some commentators on the passage, in which they are sustained by similar phraseology in other parts of the Bible. Said Jesus to the one who cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant—"Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword; and again it is recorded in Revelations xiii, 10, that "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword." Now who understands that these texts give a sanction for killing all those who use the sword or for making prisoners of all those who imprison their fellows; no one; yet there is as much reason in this as in the interpretation given to the text in question: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed."—We look upon it merely as predicting the probable fate of those who engage in such occupations. He that employs himself in warlike matters will

be apt to perish in that manner. He whose business it is to shed the blood of others, must expect to fare a similar fate.

Were we however to admit the full force of the text, as applicable to the family of Noah, there is no reason whatever, we conceive, for its extension to the present age. On the same principle we might contend for the restoration of the "Law given by Moses" in all its harsh and cruel provisions. We might contend for the revival of those punishments which the Mosaic institution annexed to the crime of "picking up sticks" on the Jewish Sabbath, and of cursing Parents, to wit:—*stoning to death*; yea, further, we would have to give up the pure morality of the gospel of Christ and go back to that system which demands "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—the system of cruel retaliation for injury received. Strange as it may appear, there are those who profess to be Christians and believers in that divine code of morals which enjoin the duties of forgiveness of injury and rendering good for evil, that will contend for capital punishment on the ground of its being commanded by Jehovah under obsolete systems of government. This is indeed the only ground on which it can be defended, but we should not expect to find such an argument in the mouth of Christians.

But says the objector; the command, "whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed" was given before the Law from Mt. Sinai, and therefore is binding though that law is abrogated by the gospel. Let us then look for other evidence in the case. We are commanded to imitate God and be perfect as he is perfect. This none will dispute. Now how did Jehovah act in the first case of murder on Record? Did he inflict Death on the fratricide Cain? Certainly not, although Cain must have known he had violated one of the laws of nature. Look too at the conduct of Christ on the cross, how he prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers! Let us not then err from the examples thus given us by the Father and Son, and we shall hardly come to a wrong in this important matter.

A second argument in favor of capital punishment, is derived from the practice of all nations. To this we have but one remark to make in reply: that if the custom of all nations is to govern us in this particular, we may on the same principle, contend for "idolatry in religion, tyranny in government, and tortures in punishment." All these things have been common, and yet prevail in by far the greater part of the nations of the earth.

3 And lastly. The abolition of capital punishment is opposed and the contrary advocated, because the abolition would be an innovation upon the established forms of society. We readily grant that it would, and for our life, we cannot see why there may not be improvements in our criminal jurisprudence as well as in every thing else. This is the age of improvement, and right glad should we be if all antiquated and barbarous customs should be speedily compelled to give way before the "march of intellect," and what is better still, before the march of that spirit of universal and practical benevolence which is the beauty and glory of the blessed gospel.

Let us, my friends, remember that nations as well as individuals are bound by the command "Thou shalt not Kill"—and that the farther we recede from that revengeful spirit which demands blood for blood the nearer we approach the inimitable perfection of Him whose nature is love and whose mercies are infinite.

Remember also that we live in a land where the will of a majority of the people is the foundation of all our laws. Hence it is in the power of every individual citizen to do something towards a reform of our judicial code if a re-

orm be needed. We can *instruct* our public servants that a change in the mode of punishment for capital offences is demanded by the spirit of Liberty and a regard for human rights which are a part and parcel of our free institutions. This is the constitutional remedy, and it becomes the people to apply it in all needful cases. Let but their will be expressed by petition or memorial to their representatives in Council assembled, with that decision and earnestness which the subject demands, and we doubt not that it will soon be our pride and boast that *no sanguinary* laws disgrace our Statute Books and bring reproach upon our character as a nation.

With these imperfect suggestions, my hearers, we leave the matter with you, trusting that you will ponder it carefully, and when you have come to a decision consonant to a spirit of benevolence that you will *act* according to its gracious dictates.

A LEAF FROM MY SKETCH BOOK.

'Come,' said my friend, 'lay aside prejudice for once, and attend our meeting this evening; Will you?'

Hesitated, it was a Universalist meeting; the skirts of my garments had never been contaminated by a resort to the inner courts of their sanctuaries. I had heretofore considered their offerings to the Holy One of Israel, as but an outward show to gain proselytes to their unholy cause, their worship of the living God, a mere pretence, to blind the eyes of the ignorant and uninformed, and a daring mockery, which the Almighty for the present permitted, that their eventual condemnation might be the more marked and severe. I had resolutely resisted every temptation to become acquainted with their doctrine, and nobly forebore to inform myself respecting any of their principles of belief, and knew as little of the articles of their faith, save the heterodox idea that all mankind would be saved, as any bigot whatever—till my amiable and particularly intimate friend Frank Stanley became a victim to their pernicious heresy.

It is time said I, that I do something more than merely pass these Universalists by with contempt; I must gird on my spiritual armor; I must make war upon them, 'with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.'

I sought Frank Stanley: I began what I intended should be a very piercing and heart-touching exhortation; but which was, perhaps, the most intemperate and violent harangue I had ever uttered. I warned him of the awful danger he was in, tried to frighten him with the fear of death, and the unescapable tortures of a state of never ending existence, if he died impenitent—arrayed hell in all the hideous paraphernalia which my education and imagination had attached to its existence; a torrent of burning, unquenchable lava: an unfathomable lake of liquid fire; with laughing demons darting their pointed flames upon their unhappy victims, and maliciously triumphing over their excruciating agony. I begged of him, if he would escape this torment, to renounce his doctrine and repent of his error, before it was forever too late.

Frank heard me patiently, uninterceptedly, and silently. When, however, I had finished my exhortation, he coolly and deliberately endeavored, by Scripture, by force of argument, and by reason, to remove the ideas I had formed, respecting the vindictive character of God, the cruel, unmerciful punishments of another state of existence, and of the fabled tartarean region which Christians denominate hell. He ended by making the request which commences this article.

I said I hesitated; true, but I finally consented to accompany him, to hear for once what could be said in favor of doctrines, which I supposed to be so deleterious in their tendency.

I entered the house with such emotions perhaps, as I should have felt, had I been entering the most noxious and loathsome den of disease; and I was particularly careful to steal away into one corner, as much in the dark as possible, where I should not be noticed; and thus escape the liability of being made an apology by others, for attending the same kind of meetings hereafter.

After being fairly seated, I began to look round, and observe the countenances of the assembly, and it seemed as if happiness was personified in the features of every Universalist present. It is carnal security, thought I.—Their minister had hardly arrived at what is termed the middle age of man; but deep thought and hard study had imprinted on his brow their inevitable traces; cheerfulness dwelt upon his countenance, but pensive seriousness was its predominant expression.

He arose to pray. I will inform the reader, that in one particular, I had not complied with the request of Frank Stanley; I had not divested myself of prejudice; and therefore, I watched the speaker with the lynx eye of jealousy and suspicion. But in his short fervent address to the throne of Mercy, I discovered nothing but what the most pious christian, could respond a hearty amen to.

But, said I to myself, in his sermon he will not be thus particular. Religion will be ridiculed, Christian duties laughed at, a day of judgment set at nought, and the coming of our Lord and Saviour to justify his chosen people, openly contemned and defied. I was disappointed. Religion, instead of being ridiculed, was enjoined upon the audience as the only source of happiness and consolation; as the only path-way of wisdom, and the only road of virtue and peace. It is true, the speaker in giving his ideas upon religion, differed materially from those, to whom I had been in the habit of listening to upon the same subject; but in my heart I could find no opposition to the present mode of interpretation. Christian duties were also descanted upon with much apparent zeal, and particularized so that no one could mistake his meaning, and I admitted to myself that I had never before known, what Christian duties were—to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, administer to the necessities of the poor and afflicted, were new additions to my vocabulary of Christian duties. I began to feel very uneasy. What if after all, I should become a Universalist, thought I. I was tempted to quit my seat, as the idea darted across my brain. But a fear of offending my friend Frank, or the influence of a higher power restrained me.

A day of judgment was not set at nought or forgotten. Most forcibly and feelingly did the preacher remind his hearers of its certainty; and the impossibility of their escaping its punishments, if they did not listen to, and obey the commandments of their crucified Lord; and he represented these punishments as perfectly just, and consistent with the character of Him whom they worshipped; for they would be administered to all transgressors, impartially; Nevertheless he entertained a hope founded on the immutable promise of Jehovah, that these judgments, punishments, or chastisements would eventuate in the best possible good to the offenders: and that they would be reconciled to the dispensations of their Heavenly Father, and finally be admitted into his immortal kingdom, without spot or blemish.

My prejudices had hitherto been leaving me, one after another, as I listened to the scripture proof, and arguments of the preacher; but here I made a last and violent effort to rally them back to their standard; it is a cold meeting after all, said I; nothing but dead morality,

no comfort administered to the saints, nothing said about their purchased possession of happiness beyond the grave; it is nothing but Deism and Atheism after all. Again to use a homely expression, I was reckoning without my host.

The speaker invited the attention of his hearers, at the close of his discourse, to the peculiar joy and peace that was given to those who firmly and unwaveringly believed in the great truths of the Christian religion. 'I am not,' said he, 'so uncharitable as to suppose, that even those who widely differ from me, as to what shall take place after the consummation of earthly scenes, are denied consolation in their sincere and honest belief. Far from it. In the blessed hope of immortality and everlasting life, there is a satisfaction which the world cannot give nor take away; and which no Deist nor Atheist ever can experience. But when is added to this the hope that all mankind shall be sharers in the blissful reality, no language can portray the joy which pervades the soul.'

Can you, my friends, he continued, for one moment send forth your imagination to that bright world of un fading glory, people it with the million sons and daughters of the human race, purified from all earthly sin, where neither low malice nor petty intrigue can disturb their harmony, where no dark demoniacal crime can have existence, and where no shrill war-trumpet can assemble its victims for immolation upon the altar of false glory and hollow ambition; but where the olive branch of peace shall forever wave its green boughs, and where the assembled universe, united in one common bond of brotherhood, cemented together by the Holy Spirit of God, shall forever raise their voices in continued songs of praise to God and the Lamb. Can you look forward to this triumphant scene, without feeling in your bosoms a glow of unearthly joy; and without pouring out your whole heart in thanksgiving to Him who suffered upon the cross, that you might obtain knowledge and rejoice in the belief of this glorious system.

My feeble pen cannot do justice to the speaker, but as he drew to a conclusion his sublime description, all the faculties of my soul were employed in listening with intense eagerness to what he was uttering, and every organ of perception was open to receive his ideas. My prejudices fled, 'without a longing, lingering look behind,' and I acknowledged myself a firm Universalist.—*Christian Bowler.*

CHARITY.

Happy is the man who has sown in his breast the seeds of charity and love? From the fountain of his heart rise rivers of goodness; and the streams overflow for the benefit of mankind. He assists the poor in their trouble; he rejoices in promoting the welfare of all men. He does not harshly censure his neighbor; he believes not the tales of envy and malevolence, nor repeats their slanders.

He forgives the frailties of men; he wipes them from his remembrance; revenge and malice have no place in his heart. For evil he returns not evil; he hates not even his enemies; but requites their injustice with friendly admonition. The grief and anxieties of men excite compassion; he endeavors to alleviate the weight of their misfortunes; and the pleasure of success rewards his labor.

He calms the fury, he heals the quarrels of angry men; and prevents the mischiefs of strife and animosity. He promotes in his neighborhood peace and good will; and his name is repeated with praise and benedictions.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you and persecute you.

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

EDITED BY T. J. SAWYER AND P. PRICE, NEW-YORK,
AND ABEL C. THOMAS, PHILADELPHIA.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1833.

PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION.

The Philadelphia Association of Universalists stands adjourned to meet at Allentown, Lehigh Co. Pa. on Wednesday, October 2d, ensuing, to continue in session two days. Brethren in the faith of the gospel are affectionately invited to attend.

ABEL C. THOMAS,
Standing Clerk.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS.

The extreme length of the Lecture on Capital Punishment, by Br. Andrews, and our wish to give it entire in one paper, deprives the present number of that variety which many might desire. The importance of the subject, however, we believe will be a sufficient apology. For ourselves, we are much gratified that it is receiving so much of public attention. It is one of immense concern, and cannot be too soon or too effectually agitated. All—every thing that can be advanced in favor of taking the life of a fellow creature, under any pretence, save in self-defence, should be laid before community, clearly and distinctly, and if the evidence will not abide the test of reason and justice, let our statute book be speedily redeemed from the foul blot which has so long stained its pages.

We are free to acknowledge that we have never yet met with sufficient evidence to establish its justice in our own mind, or even its utility. The same difficulties which have existed with thousands, have presented themselves to us. Man, it is conceded, generally, has not the right to take his own life. Can he then delegate to another a power which he does not possess, himself alone considered? If he cannot delegate to another power over his own life, he most surely cannot exercise or delegate power over another's life.

The question seems to resolve itself wholly into this, Has man a right to take that which he cannot bestow, or which he cannot restore? We think not, and as we cannot bestow, or restore life, it seems to us an awful assumption of power, thus coolly to deprive a fellow creature of that for which he is alone indebted to the great Creator of all.—We may deprive man of his personal liberty, and this can be restored again at pleasure, or whenever the law has had its demands, or the innocence of the individual is fully established. Indeed, every one, by his very admission into the social compact, virtually surrenders a portion of his liberty, to be protected in the remainder. But he cannot surrender that which he does not possess, and if he has not the right to do violence to his own life, he cannot convey the right over that life to another, or to any body of men, consequently all laws of this compact demanding the life of an individual, as a penalty, are barbarous and unjust. When, however, these laws merely extend to the liberty of the offender, and are designed so to control him as to prevent a farther violation of their requirements, as well as to exert a reforming influence, then they appear at once just and reasonable. So far the right.

In regard to utility, it seems to us equally unfortunate. The penal code has long been marked with this sanguinary penalty, and the crime, so far from decreasing under it, has rather increased. It has at least been so long totally ineffectual in accomplishing what should be the object of all punishment, (the prevention of crime and reformation of the of-

fender) that we should be fully justified in trying "new measures." And beside, we cannot conceive it necessary. Solitary imprisonment, we believe, would be found far more effectual. Man is formed for society. Deprive him of this intercourse with his fellows, and you deprive him of all that makes life to him interesting or valuable. Hold up to his view the certainty of dragging out a miserable and lonely existence in a gloomy cell, and you present him a picture more appalling than instant death on the scaffold. At least, so it seems to us. There are few subjects, in a full discussion of which, we should feel more interest than in this. And we trust there are enough of those possessing inclination, leisure and abilities, to satisfy the evidently growing interest with the public on this question. This increasing interest argues well for the benevolence of the age, and we hope it may not be suffered to retrograde, but be fostered and promoted, until the subject is more fully understood and reflected upon, than has been the case heretofore.

AN ARGUMENT.

If the reader feels an interest in tracing the progress of Universalism, and in viewing the various lights in which that doctrine has been presented to the mind of man, he will require no apology from me for introducing so many extracts from the Free Universal Magazine, published in 1793. The following, found in No. 3, p. 99, is an extract from a "speech delivered at a debate in a Literary Society in New York," on the question, "whether the doctrine of Universal Salvation is agreeable to Scripture or not?" The "speech" appears to have been delivered by "C. H.," the author of "An Old Letter" recently published in the Messenger. Can any of our New York friends inform us who "C. H." was?

A. C. T.

The scriptures teach us, that the Deity is omniscient, and foreknew all that ever would come to pass; that he is an Almighty Being; of infinite goodness and mercy. Now sir, I would ask the advocates for partial Salvation how it is possible for one soul to be eternally lost, consistent with these attributes? If he is a being of infinite power, he certainly could save all mankind; and if he is infinitely merciful, he would save them. And if any one soul is inevitably lost, it is because the Deity could not save him, or would not. Now if he could not save all men, he is not an almighty power; and if he would not save them, he is not a merciful being; because if he certainly knew, before the creation of the earth, what would be the final lot of all men; and brought into existence a number of beings, before they had ever offended him, infallibly knowing that they would sin on earth, and be eternally damned in hell, how can this be called merciful conduct? Is it not blasphemy to suppose that it is the case? Could the devil, and all the powers of hell, have concerted and executed a more infernal plan?

SOMERS, N. Y.

Universalism, we learn, is now obtaining considerable notoriety in this place, from the indefatigable labors of Rev. Henry Benedict, (Presbyterian,) Mr. Benedict is a native of Norwalk, Ct. and was for sometime pastor of the Presbyterian church in that place, but has recently located himself at Somers. We have been acquainted with him for many years, and we are sorry to see him in battle-array against Universalism, and particularly to have his opposition characterized by bigotry. In his own country, he used to say but little on the subject, publicly. Occasionally, it is true, he would notice it, with a somewhat severe remark, and indeed this is an essential with all limitarian clergymen, as few

of them would be suffered to remain long in a place, where Universalism was professed, without giving it an occasional rap over the head; but we do not now recollect of his ever making a very serious assault upon it, while he was settled in that place.

In these days, however, of improvement, and of increased zeal, it seems that he, as well as others, is not exempt from the spirit of change. In his new location, he has found it necessary to enter upon a regular warfare with Universalism, and as we understand, has said many hard things against it. From our former acquaintance with him we regret that he cannot better employ himself, and out of friendship we certainly could wish him an easier task than that which he has allotted himself, (of putting down Universalism.) From the limited conversation we have heretofore had with him, we know he has little knowledge of Universalism, and we would seriously recommend to him much study and patient investigation into the subject, before he raises the war-cry against it. And the field, too, which he has selected for these labors, we should think extremely unfortunate. Our acquaintance in Somers, is somewhat limited, it is true, but so far as it extends, we are satisfied he will have to encounter sound heads and strong minds, and he is doubtless satisfied of this himself ere now. He will find stable, determined men, who are not disposed to sit patiently down under slanderous denunciations of their faith, without asking a "reason" therefor.

In consequence of these public attacks, one of our friends took the occasion of Br. Hillyer's recent visit to Somers, to call Mr. B. into his house, and to make him acquainted with Br. H. Our friend then submitted to him some of his declarations in regard to Universalism, and requested either a definite acknowledgment, or denial, of the assertions. The only satisfaction, however, which he obtained, as we are informed, was—we will let pass whatever may or may not then have been said—we will speak of present views! A very convenient method, truly, of answering to slanders uttered under the protection of the Pulpit. The misrepresentations are gravely proclaimed from his desk, and have all the effect to engender prejudice against our doctrine, with his own people, that was originally intended, and when privately called to an account for it, "Oh—why—we will let that pass—we'll speak of present views"!!! The honesty of such a course we will leave him to settle to his own conscience. We should have expected more frankness from him. It is a pity any one should be so wedded to systems of men, as to bend in this manner.

Br. Hillyer had an appointment there. Our friend remarked to Mr. B. that as he had assailed the doctrine, it was proper he should hear it, and desired him to attend Br. H.'s Lecture; promising him at the same time an opportunity to reply to any erroneous sentiments Br. H. should advance. Oh, no! he could not do that; and turning immediately to Br. H. he hoped he would not regard it as unkind, [if not unkind, it was at least unchristian,] but he could not conscientiously attend such preaching. He had, however, opposed our doctrine, and should continue to oppose it. Honorable opposition Br. H. remarked, he could not object to, and for himself he should be happy to attend or Mr. B.'s public expression of his views, and should be equally happy to have Mr. B. attend his, and with the understanding too, of a mutual privilege to reply, if it was desired by either. But Mr. Benedict could have nothing to do with measures of this kind.

We ought not, perhaps, to blame Mr. Benedict more particularly than others in this kind of con-

doct. It is the way with the whole limitarian clergy, with very few exceptions. They can go on boldly in denouncing Universalism, while protected, by custom, in their pulpit—with great facility can erect *men of straw*, and battle away valiantly with them, and what is better than all—*here they can come off conqueror!* But ask them a reason for their conduct, under any circumstances in which that conduct would be likely to be scrutinized by the world, and these things are very unprofitable—the doctrine is too absurd to merit any attention [a pretty comment this, on their own course,] or, they have a very sudden revolution in feeling, and are afflicted with conscientious scruples. They cannot touch the unclean thing. There is another consideration, which may not be entirely without its influence—*Victory is not quite as sure in this case as in the other.*

We are sorry, at least, to see Mr. Benedict patterning after these unworthy examples of his headlong, inconsiderate brethren. We have a friendship and respect for him, as a man, and would frankly advise him either to let Universalism alone entirely, or meet it openly and honestly, with a determination to follow truth "where'er she leads the way." We can hardly think a sound, healthy conscience would be more disturbed, or worse violated in, attending on the preaching of a doctrine, and calmly and dispassionately exposing its errors, if errors it has, then in retreating within the pulpit, and dealing out hard sayings against it. Such was not the practice of the Master, and the servant surely should not be above his authority.

Our friends in Somers, we are confident, will be nothing daunted by this settled hostility. Every effort of opponents will result in eventual benefit to us, instead of injury. Even the attention of those who were before indifferent will be excited to inquire whether "these things are so," and truth will be developed. Other measures of advancing our cause could be desired, but if our opposers are determined thus indirectly to aid us, we must of course reap the advantage. P.

METHODIST LOGIC.

A friend, a resident in this city, recently spent a few days in Bridgehampton, L. I. During his visit, he informs us, he attended a methodist meeting, and heard what was aimed to be a death blow to Universalism. Some wicked Universalist, (Br. Robert Smith, of the Religious Inquirer, we suppose it must be,) had been promulgating his heretical notions in that section, (Southampton we presume,) which had impelled this champion to arise in his might, to crush the monster. It was time for them to awake, he said, and check the evil. The emissaries of this destructive heresy were active, and it was time to gird on the whole armor against it.

Now we are not disposed to doubt the just fears of our methodist brother, in the extension of heresy, if Universalism is heresy—he and all others who dread Universalism, have much cause for apprehension in the rapid strides it is now making in the public favor—but we may be allowed to question the propriety of his reasoning, or the wisdom of his conclusions. He took for his text the following, "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." This, said our methodist friend, was the strong hold of Universalism—they "trusted in the living God, who was the Savior of ALL MEN," (and took, by-the-way, special care never to quote the latter clause, 'especially of them that believe,') but he was prepared, by incontestible argument, to explode their whole system of reasoning! And how do you think, kind

reader, he effected it. Why, the penalty of the first transgression was death—"in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—this death was annihilation! Christ stepped in with his atoning sacrifice, and redeemed or saved all mankind from this annihilation; placed them in a "salvable state;" or, (to use a favorite and very expressive argument with limitarians,) "rendered it possible for all men to be saved!!" In this sense Christ was the Savior of all men—this was the general salvation. Then came the gospel with its offers of mercy and its conditions, with which, if man complied, he was entitled to immortal bliss beyond the grave, and therein was specially saved!! And thus the declarations of the text, were strictly and perfectly true, though but a small portion of our race should ever attain to the transcendent joys of heaven. Christ (who, according to Trinitarianism, is the immaculate God,) was literally the savior of all men—saved them from annihilation!—though by far the greater portion, through their neglect of gospel invitations and gospel privileges, might sink down in ceaseless despair! A nice distinction, surely; the beauties of which may be seen in a statement like this:

The eternal God pronounced the solemn sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt SURELY die;" and this death was annihilation.—The Saviour Christ, (who, it will be remembered was the immaculate God himself,) in the character of mercy steps forward and redeems or saves all men from this penalty, (annihilation,) and thus completely falsifies his own solemn and unconditional sentence, "thou shalt surely die," and fulfils, to the very letter, the declarations of the arch adversary, "Thou shalt NOT surely die"!!!

Another beauty of this illustration is here presented. The penalty of the original transgression was death—annihilation. Had it not been for the promised Saviour, man would have sunk into the silence of the grave—he would have gone "like the beasts that perish." Death would have put an end to his consciousness, and of course his pain. But the gospel appears, that better covenant, founded upon better promises, with its messages of mercy and of love. Its glorious mediator takes upon himself bowels of compassion and redeems us from this dark and cheerless state of nonentity; this dreamless slumber of the grave, and restore us—to what?—Why, according to the logic of our methodist brother, and the spirit of popular teaching—to a state of the most inconceivable and ceaseless tortures, for the great proportion of mankind! Where, we may well ask, is the benevolence of such a gospel, and such a salvation. Better by far that we should sleep on "that sleep which knows no waking." Better that we rest in the unconsciousness of the grave, than to awake to the horrors and anguish of such a state. Yet this is the kind of argument, or material, if we may so term it, with which men attempt to patch up the broken cistern of a popular theology, and to doubt its correctness and propriety, is a sin little short of discarding Revelation itself. P.

THE 213 QUESTIONS.

The editors of the Intelligencer, as will be seen by the article we copied last week, say, "There is no difficulty in answering every one of these Questions." Now we take the liberty of saying, unhesitatingly, that there is a great deal of difficulty in answering them, to their liking, and moreover, that they were fully sensible of it; and we need only point to their vituperations against the author, for full evidence of the fact. It is really surprising that men, of the acknowledged wisdom of some in that association, could suffer themselves to be so blinded by

irritation of feeling. It is not very creditable to any body of men, laying such special claims to sanctity, the moment they get into difficulty, by their own folly, to attempt to retreat under cover of a shower of abuse upon their opponent.

The truth is, friendly reader, THEY CANNOT give candid, explicit answers to the questions, consistently with their own views, and here was the difficulty, and to this may be traced their own crooked course in the business. The first two or three questions will at once involve them in almost endless difficulty. They follow:

1. As we are required to love our enemies, may we not safely infer that God loves His enemies?
2. If God loves His enemies, will he punish them more than will be for their good?
3. Would endless punishment be for the good of any being?

Now they will not seriously deny, "that God loves his enemies," neither will they affirm that "He will punish them more than is for their good," and when these points are conceded, it would be somewhat amusing to see them undertake to prove "endless punishment good for any being." When men unexpectedly get into trouble, the best way is to acknowledge it frankly, and thereby get honorably out of it. We would treat the editors of the Intelligencer with all proper respect, so far as they respect themselves. But when they let themselves down, as they have in this business, they render themselves obnoxious to severe rebuke. There are some in that association, who are not wholly insensible to what is due from man to man, saying nothing of christian obligations, and we say to them, pause—reflect! The time has gone by, when people can thus brow beat on the subject of religion, with impunity. A community is looking on, and they will sooner or later draw righteous conclusions. P.

Original.

SCRIPTURE EXPLANATION.

A very respected and worthy friend has requested us to give our views in the Messenger of the following passages of scripture, "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem: Because ye have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," Isa. xxviii, 14, 15. We could wish that some abler pen would give an exposition of the above in accordance with our friend's request and the sentiments of Universalists; but for ourselves we can see nothing in this quotation that can be construed so as to refute Universalism.

We are aware that some of our Limitarian brethren have made use of these passages to show their hearers that the opinions of Universalists are indeed a "refuge of lies," and that they have made a covenant with death and are at agreement with hell. But why do they apply to us any more than to them? It seems that these words were addressed to certain "scornful men" who ruled the people of Jerusalem. They were probably such characters as are spoken of Jer. v, 31 "the prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so," and these individuals ruled the dwellers in the city of Jerusalem. The reason assigned for this domination over the people is given thus, "Because ye have said 'we have made a covenant with death and with hell are we at agreement,'" &c.

Now it is very well known that Universalist Clergymen do not rule the great body of people; their number is small compared with their op-

posers; their faith is *unpopular* and they have few or no monied institutions which are yearly investing them with power, (for "wealth is power,") consequently they do not bear rule.—The text then does not apply to the advocates of Universalism; and this will appear still more evident, if we notice another disposition exercised by the individuals here spoken to. They not only ruled the people, but they had the presumption to affirm that the just judgments of the Almighty which he had determined to bring upon them for their sins would not be executed. Universalists do most sincerely believe that the transgressor shall receive for the deeds done, that there is a "God who judgeth righteously," and that there is no escaping the due punishment of our sins. The persons addressed in the passages before us *denied* these solemn facts, hence they said, "for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves."

Did Universalists contend that there are means of escaping the just punishment for sin, and that they could make a treaty with a threatened hell of endless torments so as to escape the justice of its demands; did they say that the awful penalty denounced against the sinner can be avoided by any possible exertion of the creature, there would become reason for "spiritualizing" the passages we are considering in such a manner as to make them apply to us.

I firmly believe (and I think that I express the opinion which Universalists entertain generally) that "God will by no means clear the guilty," and that it is impossible for the sinner to escape the chastisement which he deserves. Has the sinner *merited* endless torments in the prison-house of hell, has he been *threatened* with them by his Creator? then depend upon it he shall receive them. But it remains yet to be *proved*, after all which has been said and written about the "eternity of hell-torments," and the "self-perpetuating" principle of sin, that the sinner *has justly deserved*, and have been threatened with "infinite pain." There is nothing in these passages of scripture which can fairly and rationally be interpreted so as to infer from them the doctrine of endless misery, and although the chastisement alluded to was *certain*, and they who supposed it could be avoided sought refuge in *falsehood*, still it was a punishment of a temporal nature. "The judge of the whole earth" was about to visit the rebellious with the rod of his righteous correction. Some vainly conjectured that themselves would be overlooked and be suffered to pass *unpunished*. The scourge, said they, "shall not come unto us," but this refuge of lies was swept away like chaff before the driving tempest, when the Deity arose in his power to reward them according to their deeds.

Such will be the destiny of those who are now hiding themselves under the false notions that the sins which they commit will *never be punished*. As certainly as the Almighty is a "just God and a Savior," so truly "shall every one receive for the deeds done, and there is no respect of persons;" but as sin is *finite* in its nature, its punishment will also be *finite*. If this be not the case, the penalty could not be "according to" the deeds done. It is contended by many that as sin is an *infinite* evil the punishment must also be *infinite*. We conclude if the sin of mortal man be infinite in its nature, that his *goodness or holiness* may also be infinite; in other words, if a bad man can be *infinitely* wicked, a good man may be *infinitely* holy. But for ourselves we have always thought that *infinite* holiness and purity belong *only* to God. We have the consoling assurance in scripture that an end shall be made of sin, that death which is its "wages" shall be *destroyed*; can this be accomplished if sin be infinite?

We know not that our remarks will satisfy our much respected friend, but to us this saying of the prophet appears very plain. It was given to him to foresee the desolation which was to chastise rebellious Israel; some leaders who ruled the people declared that they had covenanted with death and hell, (or the grave,) so that they should *escape* the impending calamity, and so positive was the inspired penman of the fallacy of such a hope, that he represents these very persons themselves confessing that they "had made lies their refuge and hid themselves under falsehood."

As soon as we attempt to refer this passage (or any others in which the word "hell" is found) to the next state of being where our *creed* has built an "eternal hell," we shall involve ourselves in inconsistency and perplexity, but give it its true meaning, such as the context unfolds to us, and there is no difficulty. B. B. H.

Original.

THE WILL OF GOD.

Paul testifies that God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." But if he work some things after the will of man, then was Paul mistaken. Now we are told that God works our *salvation* according to our *own will*; and that our eternal condition does not depend upon the will of God, but upon our own choice! If this supposition be true, it would seem that the will of God is a mere nominal thing. Why speak of him as having a *will*, if he looks with indifference upon the affairs of the world; suffers things to happen by *chance*, or contrary to his desire, and allows man to sink into a place for which he *never designed him*, and there to perish eternally? Why not say at once that God has no will in relation to man, but that he suffers him to live as he lists, to die as he pleases, and to sink as far into hell as some *unforeseen and unintentional* circumstances may happen to sink him?

It really puzzles me to know what our Arminian brethren mean when they speak of the Divine will. They talk a great deal about the will of God, it is true. But, according to their notions of the Deity, it seems that he is quite destitute of a will; and that he pleases to govern at least some things after the counsel of the will of man. Or, that if God have a will, he chooses rather to determine things according to the will of man, than to work them after the "counsel of his own will."

Now this is a foolish doctrine. Its absurdity appears manifest when we look at it in the light of reason. And the declaration of Paul, cited above, strikes it a fatal blow, and clearly proves it to be as incompatible with the scriptures, as it is repugnant to common sense. And the testimony recorded by Daniel, touching the same subject, is not less explicit and satisfactory.—"And he (the Lord) doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" If this unequivocal declaration be true, it is certain that God's will is done, not only in the earth, but among the inhabitants of the earth.

Where now is the strange notion that *all things* are not done according to the will of God—but that many things are determined according to the will of man? All will readily admit that God's will is done in heaven, and that it is also accomplished in the earth so far as the inanimate and irrational part of creation is concerned, but many deny that it is accomplished among the *inhabitants* of the earth.—And this denial amounts to a palpable disbelief of the scriptures, and is preposterous withal.

It is certainly absurd to allow that every thing in nature except man is governed according to the will of God, and that man is not controlled

by the Deity. Why should man be the only object in the creation that is neglected in the government of the Most High! Alas! God has given an *agency*, over which his kingdom rules not, and over which he has no control! There's the misfortune. God has given *free-agency* to nothing but man. And now he cannot govern man. What a pity! If he had not given this free-agency to man, it is highly probable that the services of the Devil would not be needed, and that he might be stricken out of existence. This would give ease to many troubled souls. And it is furthermore probable, that all mankind might have been made holy and happy in heaven, and that all the purposes and promises of God might have been accomplished. But, alas! alas! The fatal deed is done. Man is now a FREE-AGENT, and God cannot control him!

What a most unreasonable doctrine is this! And how manifestly incompatible with the scriptures withal! It is strange to me that any man of ordinary discernment can believe it.—What is the will of God? The will of God is his determination to do any thing. Whether it be to bestow upon man salvation; or to inflict upon him, punishment. His will is not a mere *empty desire*, or an *uncertain wish* as some would have us believe. No. The very idea casts a foul odium upon the character of God. His will is nothing less than his fixed and settled determination to do any thing. I will do it, is equivalent to saying I have come to the *determination to do it*. I will not do it, is the very same as saying, I have come to the *determination not to do it*. A. M.

Reading, Pa.

BLIND ZEAL.

We have received the following, from an individual of undoubted veracity, who heard it. It is a specimen of the *ridiculous*, not to say *impious*, quite too common in revival meetings.

"At a late meeting where there were more *zeal and confusion*, than *knowledge and religion*, the following was uttered under form of prayer.—"O Lord, thou wilt bring the sinner down to the deep damnation of hell, where thou wilt melt his bones, run red hot bars of iron through his soul, and I guess he will find a hot time of it!"

☞ A. C. T. expects to be at the house of Col. Johns, near Hightstown, on Monday afternoon, 16th inst. He is expected to reply to a discourse to be delivered the day previous by a Methodist minister—notes of which will be taken by some one of our brethren.

The communication from "Amy," is thankfully received. It shall shortly appear.

"J. P." is welcomed with many thanks.

RELIGIOUS NOTICES.

Br. Robert Smith is expected to preach in Saugatuck, Ct. on the third sabbath in this month, (to-morrow,) and at Southampton, L. I. on the 5th Sunday, 29th.

Br. B. B. Hallock will preach in Milton, Ulster Co. on the third sabbath in this month, (to-morrow.)

Beauties of Arminio-Calvinism.

Just published and for sale at this office, a neat 18 mo. pamphlet of 36 closely printed pages, entitled, "The Beauties of Arminio-Calvinism; or, the story of Deacon Caleb Comfort, to which is added the vision of Deacon Peter Pious." This pamphlet comprises the five articles which have recently appeared in the columns of the Messenger, under the head *Five chapters on Partialism*, and are designed to exhibit the change which has come over the Presbyterian denomination within a few years. Price \$4 per 100, or 6 cents single.

Life of Murray,

A few copies of Whittemore's edition, just received at this Office—price 50 cents.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.

"Whither thou goest, I will go; thy people shall be my people; and thy God, my God. Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried"—Ruth, Chap. 1.

Nay, say not that we thus must part,
Nor bid me, mother, leave thee now;
I, who would bear a daughter's part,
I, who would guard thy furrow'd brow:
For mother, none of all the loved
And cherish'd of thy heart are here,
The forms that erst might joy thy sight,
The tones that erst might glad thine ear.

Nay, say not thus: by the strong love
That bound me to the noble dead,
I urge thee, mother, grant me now,
Thy woes to soothe, thy steps to tread.
My joys—were they not linked with thine,
In ties of the same hallowed home?
And vision'd hopes—were they not wreath'd
'Round the same fond ones is thy own?

Those fairy hopes are curtain'd now
In shadows of the cypress tree;
And mother, my poor heart is left
Of all, save memory's glance, and thee.
Aye—dost thou deem my heart too frail
To share thy toil—to ease thy pain?
Or stranger's land more dark to me
Than this where no fond hopes remain?

Then know thou, that my stern resolve
Can stem the rush of ev'ry tide;
Nor aught of ill—nor worst of earth,
Shall drive me hopeless from thy side.
Thou'st yet to learn that I can cling
In firm—and deep—and changeless love:
Aye, try me, by the darkest test
That strength of human heart can prove.

And what are youthful hearts to me?
'Round each is wove a mournful spell
That rushes o'er my stricken heart—
Of its past joyous dreams to tell.
Then, mother, bless me kindly now,
And I will hover 'round thy way,
Or here—or in thy foreign home—
Nor leave thee, through life's fitful day.

Yes: "where thou goest, I will go"—
If in affliction's mournful train—
My joy shall be, to cheer thy heart,
And rouse thy slumbering hopes again.
Or, if thy God send forth a ray,
From fountains of eternal peace,
To whisper of thy spirit heav'n—
I'll learn of thee, the glorious bliss!

And "where thou diest, I will die"—
Mother, when round thy wearied head
Earth's visions gather cold and dim,
And thou wouldst seek a quiet bed—
To hush thy pulse—and slumber long,
Free from the din of passing time,
How fondly will I watch thine eye,
And answer every look of thine.

And carefully I'll close thy lids,
Till morn'ring hopes of thy repose:
Waiting—I'll view thee in thy rest—
And there my own life-dream will close.
We gather'd round the same bright hearth,
When those—the fond and lov'd might come—
And, mother, thou wilt not refuse
That I should share thy narrow home.

Oh, we will slumber sweetly there,
Wrapt in the quiet of the clod:
And dust to dust, of heart and hand,
Shall mingle long in one blest sod.
And earth may press her mystic scenes
In glit'ring pomp above our bed—
Nor all their blaze, or fitful change,
Can burst the slumber of the dead.

Mother, once more, and I have done—
Ye cannot bid me leave thee more;
I cast away my household Gods
And kneel to Him thou dost adore.
All! all—"thy God shall be my God"—
I'll bow me long before his shrine,
And worship in the holy land,
In purity, with thee and thine—

For stronger, still, affection's chords
Will bind us in one hope—one faith;
And bright, and glorious the bliss,
Beyond the fearful veil of death.

THE WINTER OF EXISTENCE.

'The afflictions of a good man, (says an elegant writer) never befall without a cause, nor are sent but upon a proper errand. Those storms are never allowed to rise, but in order to dispel some noxious vapors, and restore salubrity to the moral atmosphere.' Who, that for the first time beheld the earth in the midst of winter, bound up in frost, or drenched with floods of rain, or covered with snow, would have imagined, that Nature, in its dreary and torpid state, was working towards its own renovation in the Spring? Yet we, by experience know, that those vicissitudes of winter are necessary for fertilizing the earth; and that under wintry rains and snows, lie concealed the seeds of those roses that are to blossom in the spring; of those fruits that are to ripen in the summer; and of the corn and wine which are in the harvest to make glad the heart of man. It would be more agreeable to us to be always entertained with a fair and clear atmosphere, with cloudless skies, and a perpetual sunshine. Yet in most climates that we have knowledge of, the earth, were it always to remain in such a state, would refuse to yield its fruits; and in the midst of our imagined scenes of beauty, the starved inhabitants would perish for want of food—let us quietly submit to Providence—let us conceive this life to be the winter of our existence. Now the rains must fall, and the winds must war around us; but sheltering ourselves under Him, who is the "covert from the storm," let us wait with patience, till the storms of life shall terminate with an everlasting calm."

DEATH IS THERE—A FRAGMENT.

In how many ways does he come? When the banquet is spread and all is provided that may regale the senses, that may swell the tide of joyousness, *death is there!* When blithe companions meet and the social cup goes round—*death is there.* When the thoughtless and the gay stroll along the flowery path of pleasure, there this enemy crouches for his prey. When the gilded hall is thronged, and the viol sound is heard, *death is there.* With unperceived and noiseless tread he passes round, marks his victims, and soon his arrow lays them low! He comes unexpectedly, where the child of care and disappointment pines in sadness. He comes too with a stealthier footstep where no care corrodes, where life is unembittered, where the love of life is strongest, and our hold upon it seems firmest. He comes on the chill blast of the north, and also in the breeze that fans the sultry sky of summer. He comes on the zephyr of evening, and on the bland breath of the morning. But, whereshall I stop? In every variety of method and in every imaginable circumstance does the last enemy make his attacks, and with almost unvarying constancy does he make them in a manner the most covert and insidious.

SUMMER.

This is the season when the lover of nature contemplates with the most pleasing reflections and anticipations. When is the air so full of balm? when is the breeze so full of health? when does the sun shine so cheerfully and unoppressively as now? when is the ground so beautifully, so softly carpeted, and the trees hung with such beautiful, such fragrant drapery, as now? The woods are full of melody. The azure sky seems by the sun-beams brushed of every misty cloud, that airy spirits may more clearly view the beauty of the great Creator's works; and man see mirrored in the noble arch, the grandeur of the footstool of his God.

Rise with the sun, and go forth and contemplate the beauties of nature. Those who permit him to make two or three hours of his circuit before they greet him must not be surprised if he has not a smiling sunshine for them through the day.

PARALLEL OF THE SEXES.

There is an admirable partition of qualities between the sexes, which the great author of being has distributed to each with a wisdom which calls for our admiration. Man is strong—Woman is beautiful: Man is daring and confident—Woman is diffident and unassuming. Man is great in action—Woman in suffering. Man shines abroad—Woman at home. Man talks to convince—Woman to persuade and please. Man has a rugged heart—Woman a soft and tender one. Man prevents misery—Woman relieves it. Man has science—Woman taste. Man has judgment—Woman sensibility. Man is a being of justice—Woman of Mercy.

PROSPECTUS

For the 3d vol. of the Messenger, to be published simultaneously at New-York and Philadelphia, under the title of

NEW-YORK CHRISTIAN MESSENGER AND PHILADELPHIA UNIVERSALIST.

The proposed change in the manner of publication of the Messenger, induces us thus early to present proposals for the Third Volume. No essential change will be made in the course of the paper, unless it may be to avail ourselves of every possible opportunity of increasing the talent and interest in its columns. It will, therefore, in the language it has ever held forth to the world, continue to "plead the cause of slandered and persecuted denomination of Christians the UNIVERSALISTS;" endeavor to inspire confidence among its friends, and to induce as far as possible the thoughtless and unconcerned, and even opposers, to come forward into the field of examination and "reason together" on the great and glorious doctrines of a world's reconciliation to God.

CONDITIONS.

The "N. Y. Christian Messenger and Philadelphia Universalist," will be published simultaneously in New-York and Philadelphia, every Saturday morning, on a royal sheet, quarto form, and close print, at \$2 per annum, in advance, or \$2 50 if not paid within the first six months. The first No. will appear on the first Saturday in Nov. next.

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P. PRICE,

Publisher and Proprietor

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